



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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Illegal pesticide burial, illnesses prompt fines from Agriculture Department

OLYMPIA – During the first quarter of 2006, the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) issued fines totaling \$16,150 against businesses and individuals that violated state pesticide laws and rules. Seven of the individuals had their licenses suspended.

Fines ranged from \$100 to \$3,600 for violations that included the illegal burial of pesticides, spray operations that resulted in several illnesses, and failing to comply with worker protection standards.

Actions taken were:

A2HM Inc., Chelan. WSDA alleged that a pesticide application in June 2005 at A2HM Inc.'s Mattawa orchard drifted, making two workers ill at an adjacent orchard. The workers received medical attention at the Wahluke Clinic in Mattawa. The matter was resolved when A2HM Inc. agreed to pay \$1,600. A2HM Inc. further agreed to bring all of their establishments into compliance with state worker protection standards and other pesticide laws and rules.

Thomas Archer, Hogeeye Ranch, Waitsburg. WSDA alleged that Archer improperly disposed of pesticides and pesticide containers by burning them in a road-side ditch in front of his property. In November 2004, a Columbia County road maintenance worker became ill when he dug up the burn site in order to extend a culvert. The matter was resolved when Archer agreed to pay \$1,350 and have his private applicator license suspended for 21 days.

Macario Camacho, Black Hawk Orchards LLC, Mattawa. WSDA alleged that Camacho failed to properly supervise an unlicensed applicator who was applying a restricted-use pesticide in March 2005. The pesticide drifted off-target and across an adjacent highway where a family was exposed as they drove through the cloud of spray. Family members reportedly became ill from the exposure. The matter was resolved when Camacho agreed to pay \$300 and have his private applicator license suspended for five days.

John Collum, Agate Home Inspections, Inc., Moclips, had his structural pest inspector license suspended for 30 days. Collum failed to report extensive damage and other structural problems associated with a house he inspected last October in Aberdeen.

Lyle Dach, Dach's Lawn and Tree Care Inc., Spokane, was fined \$2,200 for applications by an employee in the spring and summer of 2005 that resulted in extensive damage to several Spokane area customers' landscape ornamentals.

Jeffery Evers, Edwall Chemical Corporation, Edwall. WSDA alleged that an application by Evers damaged the wheat crop he was treating in May 2005. Evers denied the allegations. The matter was resolved when Evers agreed to pay \$100.

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Faustino Morphin and **Valley Fruit Orchards LLC**, Wapato, were fined \$3,600 for disposing pesticide products by burying them at their orchard operation in Zillah. WSDA became aware of the infractions in September 2005.

Gi Su Pak and **Haeoak Cha, KS Farms**, Orting. WSDA alleged that Pak and his employees applied restricted-use pesticides without a license, and that Pak failed to provide employees with pesticide safety and application information, pesticide training, and adequately maintained personal protective equipment as required by worker protection standards.

WSDA's inspection of pesticide operations in April 2005 revealed numerous violations, including allegations of insufficient pesticide storage and pesticide application records at KS Farms. The matter was resolved when Pak agreed to pay \$2,000 and to make extensive efforts to bring his operation into compliance. Haeoak Cha, a private applicator employed by KS Farms, had her license suspended for 30 days for failing to provide direct supervision to unlicensed employees.

Kenneth Piekarski, Pasco, was fined \$1,800 for an application he made in May 2005 that drifted off-target and onto an adjacent greenhouse operation. Several workers became ill.

John Riedel, Wenatchee. WSDA alleged that an application by Riedel in May 2005 drifted onto a nearby residence where two people were exposed and became ill. The matter was resolved when Riedel agreed to pay \$450 and have his private applicator license suspended for seven days.

Spokane County Public Works Department was fined \$900 for applications made over a series of years that damaged trees and shrubs along county roadsides. WSDA conducted an investigation in September 2005.

John Taylor, Buckeye Orchards, Wenatchee, and **Jose Michel**, Rock Island. WSDA alleged that an application by Michel to Buckeye Orchard's pears drifted onto another farmer's cherry crop across an adjacent road in June 2003. The product was not registered for use on cherries at the time of the incident. The matter was resolved when both Taylor and Michel agreed to pay \$400 each and have their private applicator licenses suspended for seven days.

Wilbur Ellis Company, Auburn. WSDA alleged that Wilbur Ellis Co. distributed restricted-use pesticides to a person in 2003 who was not licensed to purchase or apply them. The matter was resolved when Wilbur Ellis agreed to pay \$600.

Cecil Youngs, Kennewick. WSDA alleged that Youngs damaged his neighbors' trees and shrubs in March 2005 when he improperly applied a product to his own landscape. Youngs was also not licensed to apply the product, a restricted-use pesticide, due to its tendency to cause injury to susceptible non-target plants. The matter was resolved when Youngs agreed to pay \$450.

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